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ABSTRACT

In the summer and fall of 1969, a questionnaire prepared by the American Council on Education was administered to freshmen at the University of South Carolina (USC) and 270 other institutions of higher education. This report is one of a series drawn from analyses of these data and focuses on the item "highest degree planned." The data indicated that a lower percentage of freshmen at USC planned to do graduate work than the national average for other universities. Male freshmen planned to undertake graduate work more frequently than their female counterparts, as is the case at the national level. A relatively high percentage of female freshman indicated the associate degree as the highest degree planned. Out-of-state freshmen planned to pursue graduate study more frequently than did in-state freshmen. This was especially true at the master's level, but not at the doctoral level. Over a four-year period, the percentage of freshmen students planning to seek graduate degrees is increasing. (AF)

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University of South Carolina

Division of Student Affairs

Subject: Degree Plans of Entering Freshmen at the University of South Carolina, Fall 1969

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Research Notes
No. 8-70

SUBJECT: Degree Plans of Entering Freshmen at the University of South Carolina

Nature and Scope of the Study:

During orientation in the Summer and Fall of 1969, a questionnaire prepared by the American Council of Education was administered to the incoming freshmen at the University of South Carolina and 270 other institutions of higher education (46 two-year colleges, 183 four-year colleges, and 41 universities). The resulting summary data on entering freshmen included information on the entering freshmen at the University of South Carolina and weighted normative data based on questionnaire results from the 41 participating universities. Similar data were also available for the freshmen classes of 1966, 1967, and 1968.

The following is part of a series of reports drawn from analyses of these data. This report focuses on the item in the questionnaire in which the student was asked to indicate the "highest degree planned." The first part of the report examines the higher education plans of U.S.C. freshmen and compares them to the national university norms. An analysis of replies on the basis of sex is also presented. The responses of in-state and out-of-state students are examined next, followed by an analysis of responses obtained from both the Summer and the Fall Orientation groups. The final data reported compares the results of the 1969 survey with the surveys obtained in 1966, 1967, and 1968. The report concludes with a summary of observed trends.

It is felt that analysis of these and other data obtained from the questionnaire results will be useful to faculty and staff members responsible for setting policy relative to curriculum, admission requirements, counseling, etc.

Table 1. 1969 Freshman Class Data

HIGHEST DEGREE PLANNED	USC PERCENTAGE (N=2658)	NATIONAL PERCENTAGE
None	0.3	0.7
Associate (or Equivalent)	6.5	1.5
Baccalaureate	47.0	37.4
Masters	28.0	35.6
Ph. D. or Ed. D.	9.6	14.1
Other Post-Baccalaureate	8.6	10.8

COMMENT:

A lower percentage of freshmen at U.S.C. planned to do graduate work than the national average for other universities. At the national level, there were 14.3% more freshmen planning post-baccalaureate degrees than there were at U.S.C. These findings are somewhat affected by the comparatively large percentage of U.S.C. students entering associate degree programs as compared with other universities.

Table 2. Data for Male and Female Freshmen

HIGHEST DEGREE PLANNED	MALE FRESHMEN				FEMALE FRESHMEN			
	USC PCT.		NATIONAL PCT.		USC. PCT.		NATIONAL PCT.	
	1968	1969	1968	1969	1968	1969	1968	1969
None	2.7	0.1	2.1	0.5	1.9	0.7	2.4	1.0
Associate	1.3	1.4	1.2	0.7	15.3	14.2	2.3	2.7
Baccalaureate	42.6	43.1	42.6	43.1	53.1	52.9	49.8	48.9
Masters	28.3	30.7	33.7	35.9	21.8	24.1	33.1	35.2
Ph. D. or Ed. D.	12.5	12.6	18.5	18.9	5.9	4.9	7.3	7.7
Other Post-Bacc.	11.8	12.1	15.2	15.2	2.1	3.3	4.7	4.6

COMMENT:

1. Male U.S.C. Freshmen students planned to undertake graduate work more frequently than did female U.S.C. freshmen students, as is the case at the national level. The relative increase in percent planning graduate studies from 1968 to 1969 was approximately the same with males (2.8%) and females (2.5%).

2. A relatively high percentage of female freshmen at U.S.C. indicated the associate degree as the highest degree planned; however, the percentage (14.2%) was less than in 1968 (15.3%) and 1967 (18.1%). Although the percentage of U.S.C. male freshmen selecting associate degree programs was twice that of the national percentage, the percentage of U.S.C. female freshmen exceeded the national percentage by a factor of over five. This large difference reflects the fact that the associate degree programs at U.S.C. are designed to give occupational training in areas primarily of interest to female students, e.g., Secretarial Science, Pre-School Education, Technical Nursing, and Commercial Science.

3. Both male and female freshmen at U.S.C. planned to pursue graduate work less frequently than their national counterparts. Male freshmen, however, were proportionately closer to the national average than were the females.

Table 3. Data on U.S.C. In-State and Out-of-State Freshmen

HIGHEST DEGREE PLANNED	USC IN-STATE		USC OUT-OF-STATE	
	1967 (N=1586)	1969 (N=1918)	1967 (N=703)	1969 (N=756)
None	0.6	0.3	2.6	0.5
Associate	9.7	7.3	3.8	4.5
Baccalaureate	48.6	47.1	46.7	46.7
Masters	22.3	26.1	31.4	32.9
Ph. D. or Ed. D.	8.9	10.4	9.0	7.3
Other Post-Baccalaureate	9.9	8.8	6.6	7.8

COMMENT:

1. Out-of State entering freshmen planned to pursue graduate studies more frequently than did in-state freshmen. This was especially noticeable with respect to the Master's degree. However, the trend was less pronounced when viewing the entire spectrum of graduate studies. In fact, in-state students were more likely to be planning doctoral level work. Additionally, it should be noted that the percentage of in-state students planning to pursue graduate studies has increased at a much faster rate than that of out-of state students when compared with 1967 data.

2. There appeared to be a slight reduction in the percentage of out-of-state students planning to obtain Ph. D. or Ed. D. degrees in 1969 compared to 1967.

Table 4. Data on U.S.C. Summer and Fall Orientation Groups, 1969

HIGHEST DEGREE PLANNED	SUMMER ORIENTATION (N=1293)	FALL ORIENTATION (N=1365)
None	0.2	0.5
Associate	1.1	11.7
Baccalaureate	50.7	43.4
Masters	29.2	26.9
Ph. D. or Ed. D.	10.3	8.8
Other Post-Baccalaureate	8.4	8.6

COMMENT:

The data seemingly indicate that a higher percentage of entering freshmen attending Summer Orientation planned to do graduate work. However, the School of General Studies which offers the associate degree did not participate in the

Summer Orientation program. This explains both the high percentage of entering freshmen who participated in Fall Orientation and planned to obtain only an associate degree (11.7%) and; correspondingly, the lower percentage who planned to do graduate work (44.3%). Without this associate degree factor, the Summer and Fall Orientation groups moved more closely to parity.

Table 5. Summary of Data for the Past Four Years

HIGHEST DEGREE PLANNED	USC PERCENTAGE				NATIONAL PERCENTAGE			
	1966 (N=2351)	1967 (N=2289)	1968 (N=2333)	1969 (N=2658)	1966	1967	1968	1969
None	2.8	1.2	2.4	0.3	3.7	2.2	2.3	0.7
Associate	8.5	7.9	7.0	6.5	2.2	1.4	1.6	1.5
Baccalaureate	53.5	48.0	46.9	47.0	39.0	36.6	37.9	37.4
Masters	19.9	25.1	25.6	28.0	32.0	33.7	33.7	35.6
Ph. D. or Ed. D.	7.0	8.9	9.8	9.6	12.0	14.4	13.7	14.1
Other Post-Bacc.	8.2	8.8	8.2	8.6	11.1	11.7	11.8	10.8

COMMENT:

1. The data on freshmen entering U.S.C. in 1969 confirmed the trends observed in previous research notes.

2. A smaller percentage of U.S.C. freshmen are planning to terminate their formal education at the undergraduate level, with the concomitant higher percentage planning to seek graduate degrees. At the national level the percentages changed in the same direction but to a much smaller degree.

TRENDS:

1. The percentage of freshmen at U.S.C. planning to do graduate work is less than other university freshmen at the national level.

2. The annual increase in percentage of U.S.C. freshmen planning graduate work is rising at a more rapid rate than the increase at the national level.

3. The percentage of U.S.C. male freshmen planning graduate work is nearly twice that of U.S.C. female freshmen.

4. Although entering U.S.C. freshmen from out-of-state planned to pursue graduate studies more frequently than did in-state freshmen, the rate of increase in freshmen planning graduate studies is greater for in-state students.

NOTE: It should be pointed out that in all four years the questionnaire was administered during freshmen orientation. The responses, therefore, are not necessarily indicative of the attitudes held by students after being exposed to higher education.